FEBRUARY

1953

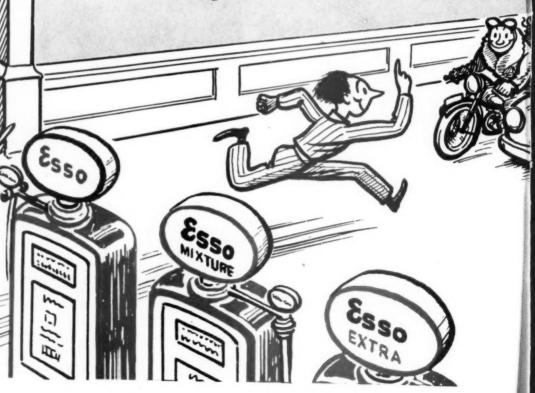
Vol. CCXXIV

No. 5861

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THE DRESSING THAT ENDS DRY SCALP





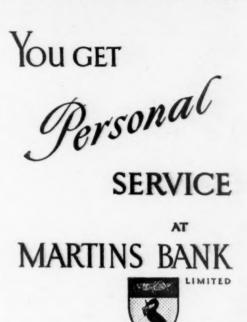
This is indeed an odd newspaper

To LOOK AT, the Manchester Guardian may seem old-fashioned. No concessions are made to the mass reader or the vulgar mind. You will search in vain for the tidbit, the juicy item, the Society scandal, the daily big-type bombshell.

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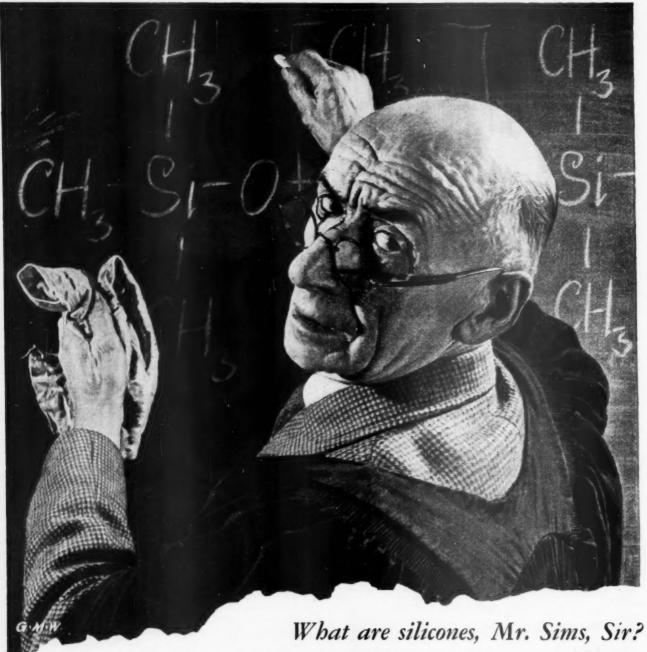
the Château de Bourg-Charente, Grand Marnier is the proud choice of those who know the rules of civilised living. Will you discover this noble liqueur tonight?

TO CLEVER HOSTESSES: Flavour Crepes Suzette with Grand Marnier

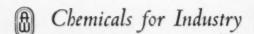


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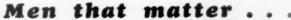


February

It is pleasant to toss pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, as an old custom reminding us of the days when life moved more slowly. Few of us, however, would wish to put the clock back, for in the twentieth century we enjoy many advantages. Among these are the services of the Midland Bank, providing the extensive banking facilities required in the modern world.

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CHARIVARIA

B.O.A.C. accountants, after estimating that the recent grounding of transatlantic Stratocruisers had lost the Corporation £10,000 a day, brightened up at the announcement, from another department, that an aircraft now undergoing tests will soon be flying to New York and back twice in twenty-four hours. Things could have been worse.

6 6

"The art of skiing, like the writing of Latin verse," says a fourth leader in *The Times*, "is one of the rather numerous things at which many of us are less good than we used to be." Some of us, of course, are as good at both as ever we were.

8 8

The idea of combating boredom in the out-patients' reception hall at a King's Lynn hospital by installing tanks of goldfish is said to be working wonders for the fish, though several patients complain that they are sick of being stared at.

8 8

Allegations of trickery in last week's ballot for peers' Coronation seats were conclusively refuted by the Marquess of Salisbury, Lord President of the Council. He gave to the House of Lords his assurance that there had been "nothing hole-and-corner or underhand" about the proceedings and that, in fact, the names of the lucky noblemen were "drawn by the Lord Chief Justice himself in the presence of the Earl Marshal." The next step is to persuade these two gentlemen to handle the allocation of Cup Final tickets.

6 6

Our contemporaries can usually be relied upon to discipline any sloppy public thinking, but on one point they seem at the moment to be as much at fault as their readers—that of drawing repeated comparisons between this Elizabethan era and the last, to the present's discredit. Let Britain count her blessings. The spectacles of historical perspective have a deceptively rosy tint, and we may be sure that if some future century brings yet a third Elizabeth to her Coronation the crowds lining the processional route will be drawing comparisons too, looking back to the spacious days when every loyal citizen had his extra quarter-pound of margarine, and the land flowed richly with increased allocations of glucose, table jellies and full-cream milk powder.

E E

Motorists are warned of the dangers of trying for high speeds on the new petrol. Police patrols have it too.

9 5

The extravagant delays which, because of increased crime and an unprecedented volume of civil litigation,



are now occurring between the institution of proceedings and the hearing of cases, are rightly provoking stern comment, both in high judicial quarters and in the more responsible sections of the Press. But indignation has reached a climax with the publication of the Sussex Express and County Herald headline: "Piltdown Man on Probation."

Sorry, the Mistress is Out

"WILFRED PICKLES

60 y 8

'Can I Come In?'

to some of the people around Camberwell Gate, London." Radio Times programme

"Who's at the door? Protect your home against unwelcome callers with LOOK-SEE, the unique wide-angle lens device which lets you see without being seen. Fits any door. Neat, unobtrusive. In black, brown or white." Daily Mail advertisement

One of the last few news items to trickle in on the cœlacanth affair describes the victim as "a five-foot prehistoric fish with hands." A more inspired dispatch might have added that it was momentarily off guard when hooked, demonstrating to an interested submarine audience the size of the angler it had just got away from.

The First National Bank of Philadelphia, says an American report, is to double the size of its premises so that customers can drive inside the building and do business without leaving their cars. Some, however, after a talk about collateral with the manager, may be asked to.

"Poet Laureate John Masefield has not yet decided what will write to celebrate the Coronation. 'It is still some he will write to celebrate the Coronation. 'It is still some distance away,' he told me yesterday. But Masefield has already made up his mind on the theme: 'I want to write something to express the hope that the Queen's reign may be happy, glorious and long.'"

Ephraim Hardcastle, in the Sunday Express

Sure it's not been done?



RADIO ROMP

GOOD evening. We hope that you are all sitting round your firesides waiting to join us in the new radio game that we in the studio are going to play this evening for the first time. It will be a much more enjoyable game for us because we shall be able to imagine all of you taking part and your happy laughter will seem to come back at us through the mike. Unless we felt that your good humour and essential decency were flowing towards us through these sound-proof and hygienic walls we could never stand the nervestrain of playing a game for hire without any hope of saving up enough to buy a pub.

Now here are the team, all keyed up to win. Actually they are not exactly a team, as they are not up against another team but more fighting it out among themselves. First, that soubrette of parlour games, that gamine of Portland Place, Dame Jennie Marshmaison, known to many of you for her work on behalf of the Women's Lifeboat Movement and to all of you for her years of service with "Up Jenkins" on the Monday evening Light, "General Post" on the Tuesday morning Home and "Consequences" between programmes on Television.

Next to her, but slightly sideways, is John Fork, known in public life for his challenging Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds and in radio life for his Desert Isthmus Discs programme of records of political speeches. He has frequently harangued the French in the programme "L'Albion Perfervide."

Then we have Lily Grew, without whom no parlour game would have its meed of rippling laughter. Listeners have frequently insisted on the reinstatement of Lily Grew in programmes. After some years as a fern-florist she attracted the notice of Wilson Barrett and played a number of Imperial Roman parts with his company. She first broadcast in some of our reminiscent programmes and stayed on after we had finished 1911 to lend a hand with the poetry-reading to schools, a very heavy call on our resources as, come wet, come shine, the flow of verse must never be allowed to falter.

Every game needs some light relief, and this explains the inclusion of Sid Hindle, the well-known female impersonator, in the team. He may not often score, but he keeps things rattling along with his uncanny sense of what the Average Listener will find amusing.

Lastly, I might perhaps mention that this is Philip Max-Threpstow, your Game Warden, introducing the programme. Dame Jennie has just insisted I remind you that I am a veteran of the Factual Broadcast and part-scriptwriter of "So That Was Science," "In the Days of Yore at the Nore" and "Mummy Earwig and Daddy Bluebottle." This programme, by the way, is produced, I see, by a Millicent Frouse.

I hope that you are now really feeling one of us and I can go on to introduce the game. It is "Clumps," by

permission of Lucius T. Fother. First the players divide into two "Clumps" or groups. We have already drawn the names from a hat, and in Clump A are Dame Jennie and John and in Clump B, Lily and Sid. Now one player from each Clump goes outside while . . .

Oh yes, Sid has just whispered to me that we need a bit of light relief, so he will be explaining the next part of the game himself. He wants me to tell you that he will be impersonating Lily Grew: I think I mentioned that he was a well-known female impersonator. I rather fancy that this is the first time he has impersonated Lily. Yes? Lily tells me that she is usually impersonated by a Madge Fandango who specializes in impersonating her. Before Sid takes over I must mention that he has borrowed Dame Jennie's muff. So just imagine him with his hands . . . no, he is wearing it on his head like a bearskin. Very amusing, really.

Now, Sid, fire away . . . R. G. G. PRICE

9 9

"Punch Behind the Atom Blast"

Headline in Yorkshire Evening Post

Well, we weren't going to say anything, of course . . .



"It all started when we had an argument about which was the most intelligent breed."

DIVIDED THEY STAND

THE curious alliance of Trade Unionists and intellectual Socialists to form the Labour Party was brought about largely through the efforts of Sidney Webb and his fellow Fabians. They were to provide the brains, and the others the votes and the cash. It seemed, especially to the Fabians, a fair division of labour. In her Diaries Mrs. Webb frequently expresses her unbounded contempt for the proletarians who were. for their own good, thus to team up with their enlightened betters. It may be assumed that Webb shared her view in this respect, as, indeed, in all others. Even so, despite occasional mutterings and mutinies, the alliance worked. The inherently conservative force of Trade Unionism, like Boxer in George Orwell's "Animal Farm," was harnessed to one of the oddest band-wagons of history-an astonishing collection of exponents of all imaginable, and unimaginable, ideologies, from Wind on the Heath, Brother, to Workers of the World Unite. In opposition it was relatively easy for this ill-assorted company to hold together. Each particular interest, it was fondly supposed, would be taken care of once power was achieved. The day of bi-metallism, of single-taxing, of proportional representation, of humane-killing, would surely dawn. Meanwhile it sufficed to promote the advancement of "the Movement" as such.

Yet even in opposition certain innate cleavages manifested themselves, as, for instance, when at the 1935 Labour Party Conference Ernest Bevin angrily complained that George Lansbury, in furtherance of his

"But don't you see—if you're to the right of Labour and I'm to the left of the T.U.C., we must belong to roughly the same splinter group."

pacifist aspirations, had been taking "his conscience round from body to body asking to be told what to do with it." In office the tension inevitably became more pronounced. As between the trade unionists whose chief objective was to improve their own circumstances and the ideologues who were bent upon a radical transformation of society, there was in the last resort little common ground. It was Wykehamists with nothing to lose but their old school ties who called the toilers to the barricades, the toilers who tended to hold back. The class war, it was clear, was going to be won, if at all, on the playing fields of Eton rather than on the asphalt playgrounds of elementary schools.

For a party manager like Mr. Herbert Morrison such a state of affairs presents grave difficulties. From the "militants" in the constituencies comes an insistent demand for a more "forward" policy at home and abroad; from Transport House come ever more marked expressions of distaste for further doses of nationalization or any other like adventures at this time. The Parliamentary Bevanites (described by Mr. Gaitskell as "frustrated journalists," and indubitably toilers-if toilers they be-by brain rather than by hand) loudly clamour for what the T.U.C. bosses abhor. Though the T.U.C. bosses have the block vote in their pockets, not to mention large funds in the bank, a few constituency "militants" can always get together and pass a Bevanite resolution. Between the two, what is poor Mr. Morrison to do?

His anxieties must be the greater because there is always the possibility that the T.U.C. might break away from the Labour Party, and, as in the United States, pursue its own interests uncommitted to any political affiliation. Where would the "militants," and for that matter the Labour Party, be then? It is like a ship some of whose crew are insistent she is unseaworthy, and will at a pinch make her so to prove their point, while others are concerned to take her safely into port and derive the greatest possible profit from the voyage. The Captain who must mount the bridge in such circumstances is in a sorry case indeed, particularly when bad weather blows up and he has to call for the pumps to be manned. It is an ironical circumstance that the Labour Party, which rode to power on an apocalyptic vision of the impending doom of Capitalism, should now be put in so difficult a situation by Capitalism's present straitened circumstances. It is as though a Salvation Army band should turn out for the Day of Judgment, only to find, when the earth began veritably to shake and the heavens to unroll like a scroll, that all the drums and the heavy brass refused to admit any break in the weather. Such is the dilemma with which the Labour Party leadership is now confronted.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE



Gobbo: "Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well."; "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well." (The Merchant of Venice, Act II, Sc. II).

PSYCHOBIBS

IT is to the Bouverie Institute of Building Science (BIBS)-that sublime temple of knowledge, and bottomless receptacle for public funds—that we owe the very conception of an entirely new branch of learning: Building Psychology. The discovery of this new field for the dissipation and wastage of human endeavour burst lately upon the scientific world like a thunderclap, with the publication of the Institute's monstrous cloth-bound report PSYCHOBIBS/1. Architectural bodies in all continents are eagerly initiating research programmes on related lines, and as eagerly applying for grants to pay for them; several American universities have already introduced, in mid-semester, courses and diplomas in Building Psychology. Once again Britain has shown the way. It cannot be amiss to give a brief outline of PSYCHOBIBS/1 in these informed columns, particularly as the report itself costs thirty-five shillings.

The human psyche (asserts the preamble) is deeply affected by the buildings that form its intimate daily environment. No art more than architecture penetrates and suffuses men's daily lives; and it may well be that in an informed and enlightened architecture we should find the cure for all the psychoneuroses that beset mankind. The science of Building Psychology, or Tectopsychology, deals with the effect or impact of buildings in general on the human psyche. PSYCHOBIBS/1 contains a number of detailed examples of this effect, the results of preliminary field studies; and the general conclusions tentatively drawn from these. There are no pictures and no conversations; but one cannot have everything, even in a thirty-five-shilling report.

Human beings in relation to buildings fall, says PSYCHOBIBS, into two categories: the *internal* and the *external*. It is important to use these terms strictly with reference to the building under consideration; a human being *internal* in relation to one building may well be *external* in relation to another. To simplify this difficult concept, the report asks us to consider





an example. Let us imagine a man looking out from a window of the Royal College of Organists towards the Royal Albert Hall. In relation to the College of Organists he is internal, an *Endopsych*; in relation to the Albert Hall he is a *Peripsych*. The Albert Hall affects him peripsychically, and that, the reader may well think, goes a long way towards explaining the Albert Hall.

There are two other minor categories of human being, the *ingoing* and the *outgoing*. The psyche in these transitory states may be profoundly affected by architectural details such as porches and pillared porticoes which otherwise have little tectopsychic effect; but little work has yet been done in this special field, and all the Institute has really done, with its passion for classifying things under headings, is to invent the simple terms *Eingangswirkungen* and *Ausgangswirkungen* to cover these phenomena.

PSYCHOBIBS/I has only room to consider the endotectopsychic state, or the state of mind of a man inside a building. Peripsychs have to wait for Volume 2.

To some extent the endopsychic state may be due to purely physical effects. Thus, an excessive steepness of staircase may induce a condition of $dyspn \omega a$, or breathlessness. If the ceilings are too low the endopsych may tend towards acephaly, the state of possessing no head. Then again—to choose an example from the limited field of Ausgangswirkungen—an endopsych passing regressively to a peripsychic state may be subject to a traumatic neurosis of a hypnogenic type, or, to put it less scientifically, a man who walks out of a building backwards may fall down the steps and stun himself.

These effects are, however, largely material. The Institute is more concerned with true endotectopsychic states, and some of its conclusions are striking, even alarming. A man cannot, they say, live in a badly designed room without becoming the victim of psychic disbalance. If he paints the room red he will get anxiety hysteria. If he paints it blue he will get morbid psychasthenia. If he does not paint it at all it will look shabby. Furniture of any kind leads to infantile hallucinations, and the Institute cannot

recommend its use. The shape of a room is of the highest importance. A rectangular room will, by its nature, have corners; and the tendency of modern man is to creep into such corners and curl up. The only way of avoiding this regressive behaviour is to make the room entirely without corners. The perfectly corner-free room is the spherical room; but in a spherical room the endopsych cannot stand up, except in a small space right in the middle. Also it is very difficult for him to reach a door in such a room unless it is placed immediately below him; and then, if someone opens it unexpectedly, he falls out. It is clear that the Institute's work reveals an enormous field for the investigation of forward-looking architects and interior decorators.

Such, then, are the first halting steps of the infant science of Building Psychology. We await with overpowering impatience (as, no doubt, do our readers) the dawn of Peritectopsychics, in PSYCHOBIBS/2.

R. P. LISTER

REPEAT PERFORMANCE

"FALSE, false!" young Roland cried, and threw the

Into the lake, and gave her in its stead A single rose. Pacing the shore alone,

"Deceived, deceived!" he cried: which done and said He put the pistol up against his head And, though he wasn't very good at gunnery,

Could hardly miss. As soon as he was dead Fair Isabel retired into a nunnery.

So ends my tale. In case you came in late,
Where, when and why these various things were done,
Whether the stone was his, or hers as well,
And whether it was false or Isabel,
And why he died and she became a nun,
I will recall, and in due course relate.

P. M. HUBBARD







ASHION has developed a complicated sophistication since it originated, in relative simplicity, with Eve. It was easier for Eve, of course. She had no competition. Nowadays we must not only please and impress but we must do it better than the-girl-next-door. She wears the new tight waist, so ours must be tighter; she lowers it to her hips, ours shall drop to our knees. The fact that the girl-next-door has a waist measurement of thirty while ours is thirty-two has nothing to do with it-fashionable we want to be, and fashionable we shall be. No matter if we are compressed until we cannot breathe, padded until we cannot get through the door, hobbled until we can't get on the bus-we are fashionable.

The depressing truth is, of course, that to all of this the-girlnext-door is quite possibly oblivious. She'll gossip cheerfully in the shops serenely unaware that we are observing with gnashing teeth that she wears the new (but new) neckline. She has, in all probability, been wearing it unnoticed for five

Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers. New, new, new it must be, and fashionable women will be wearing this spring and summer the new designs that the Big Eleven showed last week. These, unlike those of the Paris houses, cannot be bought and copied by British manufacturers, and it is only in their general lines that they influence the clothes in the shops. Paris creations are more extreme, designed to be modified, while London's are conservative, designed not only to be worn but often, one must conclude, to pass unnoticed.

Many of the designs, in fact, do not seem to differ greatly from those we are familiar with already-two notable exceptions being the new swept-forward look and the new swept-backward look. This last is the Liquid Look, which "has much movement in the form of pleats, godets, fringes, and serpentine panels, all of which flow towards the back." It is, however, "firm and calm when static," says its creator, Mr. Michael Sherard. Otherwise I saw coats similar to those we have been wearing for some time, and I have a suit which seems distinguished in style from many of those shown only in the basic differences between the mannequins and me. My other suit, I am delighted to learn, has the new Tango Line-it dips at the back.

To be fashionable this season you will wear worsted, flannel, silk, wild silk (?), linen, surah, shantung, barathea, tweed, velour, taffeta, tulle, lace, organza, slipper-satin, brocade, tricotine that looks like jersey-weave barathea, or a new fabric like horsehair canvas. Navyand-white displaces black-and-white, says one designer; black-and-white is in, says another. Or you can wear grey, red, yellow, green, creamy beige, cinnamon toast, blue grass, ash-blue, smoke-blue, smoke-beige, strawberry pink, new geranium, Devonshire cream, deep mole. And you'll be all right in anthracite, porridge, or chewed string. On



hemlines, only the very irresponsible will ignore Mr. Digby Morton, who tells us that clothes will be longer for a well-bred look.

For the benefit of those who hadn't noticed, the strapless dress has been away but has now come back. "Blessed as Englishwomen are with marvellous necks and shoulders," says Mr. Victor Stiebel rashly, "why should they not show them?" Evening dresses were magnificent, with wide, fabulous skirts; the kind, says Mr. Mattli, that go swishshshshsh down the stairs, and possibly, I fear, rrrrrip on the way up. Others, quite obviously, were too tight to leave the ground floor at all.

The word "Coronation" appears several times in the publicity handouts, but is usually qualified by the statement that designs are not influenced by the Coronation. John Cavanagh, however, used buttons with an "E" and an "EP" design and a printed silk with an "E" motif. Mr. Norman Hartnell went further; his collection, apart from spring fashions, included a white-and-gold array of magnificent dresses for the Abbey, and for State evening functions. Twice, at other shows, I glimpsed a peeress's robe flitting briefly past the end of, but not in front of, my row. There were one or two tiaras, some in fur; one was held rather blatantly in place with what appeared to be an elastic band.

Most of the collections were presented in the conventional manner, with rows of journalists sitting shoulder to shoulder and sometimes ear to ear, and an ever-changing stream of mannequins called either "No. 43, Sheer Madness," or "Rosemary, in No. 37," or "Sorry, this has no number." The models in one collection were graced by the names of Queens of England, and a sotto voce argument behind me concerning Hadvisa's dates only added confusion to my new conception of Matilda as a blue dress splashed with white paint, and Ethelburga as a black suit with a pleated skirt.

The presentation of Mr. Peter Russell's collection was, I understand, an exception to the rule. Arriving only ten minutes early and thus being too late for a seat, several of us were shooed downstairs to an annexe to the dressing room. The models were numbered up to fifty on the programme, and of these we saw some six or seven. Mannequins shot straight past us to the showroom, some bestowing a fleeting smile, one bearing the numbered card in her teeth, and several without shoes. The shoes, I believe, were shared, and exchanged on the stairs. The atmosphere was rather chummier than at the other shows, laced as it was with cheery promises to come

back to us later, exhortations to Nora to get her skirt straight, and sharp reprimands to Edna to get a move on for heaven's sake and mind the fire.

So there it is. Fashion straight from the top designers, provided you have the bank roll. The only trouble is, of course, that even bank rolls have a depressing habit of saying they much prefer the blue thing we wore on Monday when we bathed the dog.

MARJORIE RIDDELL



"T's an odd thing," said Manley,
"but this cat was actually sitting on the mat." The captain's
face stayed blank. Manley stood in
the doorway, holding the cat with
one hand. It showed its teeth,
silently, with menace.

"Civilization," said the captain.
"Not right, really. Should be hunting. What's the position? No food.
Hang about doors. How'd you like being set down in the jungle? Same thing. Starve, I'll bet."

"I'm sure I should," Manley said. He stroked the cat's head. It looked solemn. The captain, sitting by the fire, said "Doesn't do to encourage it. Never know where you are. Tell its friends, place covered with cats in two shakes. Neighbours don't like it."

"Nonsense," said Manley. "I think I'll give it some milk." He carried the cat into the kitchen. It prowled delicately about the tabletop. The captain followed and watched with disapproval as Manley poured milk into a saucer. The cat reconnoitred it with its whiskers and sat down. Its tongue came out. They stood watching it.

"You've done it now," the captain said. "Never go away. Give it milk, end up by chasing it. Always the same. Drive you daft."

Manley was contemplating the cat. He suddenly bent his knees to get his eyes on the same level as the table-top. The cat stopped drinking and gazed at him. The captain said "Watch out. Get too near when it's

CERTAIN IDEAS OVERLAPPING

feeding, flash, wound in the cheek. Never know where it's been. Infection. Carried off."

Manley straightened up. "I was just wondering how they did that," he said.

"Did what?" inquired the captain.

"Lap," said Manley. "Lapping it up. It's curious."

"Easy," said the captain.
"Thing about dogs, cats. Haven't got any hands. Self-evident. No use giving 'em a cup. What do they do? Dip their tongues in. Only thing left, really."

"Oh, I don't know," said Manley, pouring out more milk. "What about cows and horses? They haven't got any hands, either. They don't lap. They suck."

The captain looked at the cat reprovingly. "Strange thing that," he said. "Never occurred to me before. Sticks out a mile. Cats and dogs should see it. More efficient, less noise. Cleaner, probably. Understood the cat was a clean animal." He scratched his head.

"They haven't got on to it," said Manley. "They're mental midgets. No wonder we're in charge. There's not much competition from the animal world." He stroked the cat. "Lapping. What a way to drink."

"Moot point," the captain said.
"It gets it up. Saucer of milk, lap,

lap. Clean as a whistle. You can't complain."

They stared at the cat. It yawned at them remotely. "I'd like to know how it actually does it," Manley said.

"Like a dog," said the captain.
"Gets its tongue under a portion of
milk. Suddenly throws it back
before it's got time to fall out. The
milk, I mean. Lap. Noise made by
milk crashing against the roof of its
mouth."

"I don't think so," said Manley.
"There's a sort of defile down its
tongue. I think the milk runs in
there. Then the tip of the tongue is
curled up to hold it safe and the
tongue is withdrawn, carrying its
load of lactic nourishment."

"Less of that," the captain said sternly.

"Milk," said Manley.

"What makes the lap, then?" asked the captain. "I mean, in your system?"

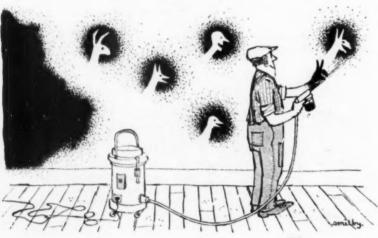
"Unreeling its tongue," said Manley. "Clicking it back to the next intaking position. Like the noise a whip makes."

The captain breathed out suddenly through his nostrils. He grasped the bottle and they squatted down with their eyes on the table level, side by side. The captain poured more milk into the saucer. The cat started to drink, an eye open for one false move. "Waving its tail," the captain muttered. "Watch out for action. Bad sign." They stared at the cat's tongue.

"It looks as if it's dipping it in and then wringing it out in its mouth," Manley said. "Distinct signs of throwing it back," the captain stated. "Couldn't miss it." "That's just the appearance," Manley said. "I caught a definite glimpse of a characteristic reflex unsnapping action."

The milk vanished but the cat remained crouched, ready for counter-attack if necessary. They straightened up slowly.

"Of course," Manley said thoughtfully, "we could work it out acoustically. On your system there'd



be a lap at the moment of throwing it back. On mine the lap would come after it."

The captain refilled the saucer. There was no flicker of expression on the cat's face. It began to lap. They stopped breathing. The cat finished the milk and sat back, cleaning its whiskers, leaving its claws in a handy position.

"Oh, certainly," the captain said. "Beyond a doubt. Loud lap

on the way in."

"I thought it was a split second afterwards," Manley said. "I don't want to press the point, natur-

ally-"

"Tell you what," the captain said firmly. "Try it. Anything animal can do, not beyond a human being. Cats lap. Right. Do it ourselves. Slow motion. Prove it in a jiffy."

jiffy."
"Excellent!" cried Manley. He reached down two more saucers and poured milk into them. The cat

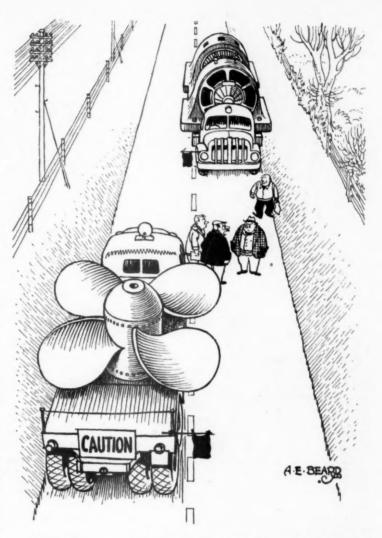
eyed him like a gunman.

"Half a mo'," said the captain.
"Got to have everything right.
Cat's head straight over the saucer.
Must be the same. Not possible on the table. Wrong angle. Only one thing for it. On the floor."

The cat loosened its pistol in the holster. Manley took up the two saucers and it looked as if it were coming out firing, but thought better of it. The captain placed the saucers on the linoleum. "Now," he said. "Have to get flat on the floor. Who goes first?" He lowered himself down. "You do," said Manley. The captain looked a little pained. "Right," he said.

He bent his head down, with his tongue out. There was a tremendous choking noise and he sat up, scattering milk all over the floor. "Up my nose!" he gasped. The cat took its pistol out and made sure there was a full clip in. Manley mopped up the captain's face. "Not made for it," the captain coughed. "Can't get in. Nose touches bottom."

"It was the wrong system," said Manley. "With mine it doesn't matter how long the nose is. The cats have worked out that little thing for themselves. No flies on our feline friends when it comes to collecting the milk." He got down



"Same here—every detail planned, they said, bridges checked, crowded areas by-passed, difficult corners avoided, everything taken care of . . ."

to his own saucer and stuck his tongue into it, curved up the end and drew it in. There was no milk. He tried again. There was no milk.

"Not a sound," said the captain.
"That proves it."

"No milk, either," said Manley, "so it doesn't prove a thing." They ruminated for a few minutes.

"I know," said Manley, slapping his thigh. "Photographic evidence is the thing. We'll photograph it. We'll get a close-up of its tongue." The cat took its safety-catch off. When Manley returned with the camera he arranged it for a picture at a distance of one foot. "You'll have to hold the light so that it falls on its tongue," he said. The captain climbed on a chair and manœuvred with the cable from the ceiling. Manley poured out some more milk into the cat's saucer. It narrowed its eyes and stealthily slid a cartridge into the breech.

"Not drinking," said the captain.
"Small-capacity cat, that. Never met a cat that couldn't drink



"Well, I live next door and my bobby happens to be television."

milk till the cows came home. Unique."

Manley pushed the saucer under the cat's nose and tried to get its head down. With a leap, it let him have the full magazine and fled for the open window. Manley shrieked and dropped the camera.

"Told you," said the captain, severely, from near the ceiling. "Give 'em milk. Don't thank you for it. Quite the reverse. I like a dog myself."

Manley sucked his hand madly and turned to see Clara in the doorway. "What are you two up to?" she asked, putting her keys away into her handbag.

"Photographing a cat," the captain said in a strangled voice.

"For a calendar," Manley explained, rapidly. "The captain said he wanted a good photograph

of a cat for a calendar. He likes cats."

"I just heard him say he likes dogs," Clara said.

"Not on calendars," Manley said.

Clara looked at the scene. "You don't have to have three saucers, do you?" she said, in an odd tone.

"Camera angles," the captain croaked. "Difficult job. Temperamental animal, the cat. Moving it about. Attracted to milk. Natural picture the best, of course. Posed, looks artificial. Too stiff." He gave what he obviously thought was an æsthete's laugh.

"Did you get the picture?" Clara asked, looking at Manley strangely.

"As a matter of fact, no," he said seriously. "We were beaten on the last lap."

VERLAINE EN A ASSEZ

LES sanglots longs
Des chansons
De l'Amérique
Blessent mon cœur
D'une douleur
Tout physique.

Trouvant affreux
Les tons hideux
Des chanteurs,
Je me souviens
Des chants anciens
Et je pleure.

Leurs voix me suivent,
Mornes, plaintives,
Dieu, partout;
Un sabbat
De trente chats
M'est plus doux.



SOMEWHERE ABOUT

"GINGERBREAD," pondered Miss Twist, resting her fore-tinger thoughtfully against her cheek like a clergyman in a photograph. "I know I have an excellent recipe somewhere, full of black treacle, if only I can lay my hand on it."

She rose and attacked a pile of magazines on the window-sill.

"It isn't urgent——" I began, but Miss Twist was sending a barrage of weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies flying one after the other on to the sofa and did not appear to hear me.

"It's jotted down on a piece of deep blue paper, dear, with a deckled edge. Pretentious in the extreme, and no choice of mine. My cousin Florence has sent me writing paper Christmas after Christmas, ever since the Boer War, and each more ghastly than the last: though I do feel that this year she has reached a new rock low, or whatever that compelling modern phrase is. One might just as well write on sugar-bags."

She finished demolishing the pile and stood deep in thought, her fingers thrust through her grey hair. Suddenly she caught sight of herself in the mirror.

"Eldritch locks!" she said,



pointing a skinny finger at her reflection. "Now I really know what that means, dear, though no nearer the gingerbread. To work, to work!"

She flew to her bureau and tugged open the top drawer with difficulty.

"I often pop an odd paper in here. Do look at this! A bell-ringers' outing to Skegness, before the war, in one of those charabancs with a hood and, I should think by the look of our hair, no mica side curtains that buttoned on and split half your nails! Would you remember those, dear?"

She flung out a clock pendulum, a pack of "Happy Families" cards, a packet of dwarf nasturtiums and a nasty snarl of assorted wools.

"This is the most likely spot in the house," she said. "I know I put the recipe in just such a hidey-hole. The bicarb. goes in with the warm milk. Take a look at that!"

She passed over a yellowing pamphlet, with horrifying illustrations of the respiratory system in three colours.

"Got up by a crank uncle of mine. He had eccentric ideas on breathing. One long in, and two short out, I think he advocated, or am I thinking of morse? He was carried off with congestion of the lungs."

She now emptied the drawer out on to the back page of *The Times*, and I replaced two glass lustres, a wooden mushroom for darning socks and a withered ornamental gourd, which had rolled over the edge.

"Please don't bother——" I began, shocked at the havoc I was creating.

"Stay!" said Miss Twist, jumping lightly over The Times. "It may be in the chest on the landing!" She led the way nimbly upstairs. "I remember putting a pile of local papers in there last week, ready for posting to Monty in Southern Rhodesia, and it may have slipped among them. A wag, that boy! He once hung all my dolls from the balcony, with strings round their

necks, and said he was having a French Revolution. Full of imagination, but inclined to astigmatism!"

She ceased her energetic diving for a moment and surfaced.

"This is the new wing of young David's research laboratory," she said, thrusting a small photograph into my hand, "and anything more unpleasant than those poor women holding up six floors with their heads I can't imagine. What d'you call them? Dairy cats, in the crosswords, dear, but their real name always evades me."

"Carvatids?" I ventured.

"That's it, dear." She banged down the lid. "No further forward here, I fear." She played a thoughtful little tune on a warming-pan for a few seconds, then stopped abruptly.

"I have it! Mother's reticule!" She darted downstairs again, her thin legs as spry as a bird's, and took out the bag from behind the wireless set. She extracted a bundle of papers, many of them of the despised deep blue.

"I'm using it up gradually, dear. Laundry lists, suggestions for W. I. meetings (and if anyone is so foolhardy as to suggest basket-making, after poor Miss Potts nearly had her eye whipped out with that dangerous piece of cane at the demonstration, I shall be very much surprised) and several hand-picked recipes. Ah!"

She pounced on one piece, read it through and tucked it briskly into an envelope, which had "Water Colours of the Constable Country by a Gentlewoman" printed on the top, and handed it over to me triumphantly.

She rose from the sofa, and the tide of magazines swept to the floor and mingled with the flotsam and jetsam that covered *The Times*. Picking our way over it all, we reached the door and bade each other an affectionate farewell.

It was an excellent recipe, as I found when I got home and studied it. But only for those who like chutney.

D. J. Saint

COME CLEAN

Daily Toiler

THE WORLD.

AT LAST! OUR OWN PURGE OPENS

Early this morning ex-Comrade Holly Parritt confessed corruption by reactionary ideological-political indoctrination (for report of proceedings, see col. 2, below) when disclosing details of his beastlike conspiracy with other warmongering hangmen, hitherto high in Party councils, to gain possession of seats for the so-called Coronation.

We are a disgusting nest of monopoly-capitalist-perversionists and cannibal-embezzlers," admitted traitor Parritt after questioning at his home by Party committee-members, "and lackeys of the imperialist

Now unmasked as enemies of Comrade Stalin, the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Democracies, Parritt and his rotten hyenas began their Gadarene plunge some weeks

Bestial Betrayal

They first attempted to bribe club servants, caretakers and other oppressed pawns of the filthy capitalist-imperialistspeculators, including Comrade-artisans engaged in erecting scaffolding in the Mall, and an alto chorister of Westminster Abbey. When these endeavours failed of success, the despicable con-spirators inserted newspaper advertisements offering substantial sums for the gratification of their depraved anti-Marxist-Leninist aspirations.

The vigilance of a loyal worker employed by the falsifying multimillionaire Press led to the exposure of the plot and the decisive uprooting of these noxious weeds of bestial betrayal.

Decorations Removed

Parritt was purged just before 3 A.M. to-day, and stood with head bowed while a committee-member removed his decorations, including the Red Banner of Labour which has long reposed, nauseating mockery, in the corner of the kitchen.

Invited to speak in his defence, Parritt refused. "I am a bourgeois-nationalist muckheap," he said.

Executions Hit Fighting Fund

PURGES cost money. cannot decimate our ranks without funds. Contributions in-evitably drop off as hyenas are exposed and dealt with. Will YOU help fill the gap by sending elevenpence NOW?

THE TRAITOR TELLS

"I AM A HYENA"

The full report of Parritt's inter-rogation by the Party Executive was issued here to-day, says Tass.

"I admit betraying the workers and their glorious leader Stalin," Parritt, who was wearing a western-style blue serge suit and a bourgeois collar and tie, said. 'I was suborned by the filthy propaganda of the American-plutocrat-dominated ticket agencies. I was acting solely in my own interests and against those of the workers. I am a disgusting hyena and counter-revolutionary and deserve the worst punishment I can be awarded."

Plot Against Workers

Asked by the Committee whether he had involved other workers in his machinations, Parritt replied "I was in touch with several comrades in the movement, but I have not yet been told who

(turn to page 4)

Our Arthur



WHERE IS THE BISHOP?

Missing Since Evensong

CANTCHESTER

FEARS are entertained for the safety of Dr. Radlett Thompson, Bishop of Cantchester, who has not been seen since quitting his cathedral after evensong last Sunday.

The Bishop was to have taken the chair at a meeting of the Cantchester chapel of the National Union of Ecclesiastical Workers, of which he is the Father, at eight o'clock. When he had still failed to arrive at a quarter to nine a telephone call was put through to the Palace. Bishop's housekeeper, who replied, said "The Comrade Bishop has not been home since evensong.

CORONATION LINK-UP

A friend who knows the Bishop well told our correspondent "Dr. Thompson

STOP PRESS

PURGE (this page)

Next to confess according to Tass reports will be

Bluebell (100-8) Voltaire (20-1)

Grisly Dean (scr) PARRITT FOR CHESHIRE SALT-PANS

Off 5.30

has been rather worried recently over his responsibilities in connection with the forthcoming Coronation.

"He was visited last week by a delegation from London. I cannot remember who was in the delegation, but I know it included Mr. Parritt and Cecil Browse, the ticket-agent.'

(Dalm Putt on Parrittism: p. 3)



WHAT'S THE NORM, COMRADE?

THERE are grey, grey days ahead for Iron Curtain sportsmen, if a meeting of the "State Society of Rumanian Democratic Hunters" held in Bucharest recently is anything to go by. This momentous gathering pointed the way in which the Cominform's blood sports could not only be finally democratized in the 1953 season but also be hitched, as firmly as a turbo-generator, to the economic programme. To this end, Rumania's hunters were split up into three classes, each of them allotted its appropriate "output target," and St. Stakhanov was, so to say, installed as the new patron saint over all.

In rough shooting, for example, the Class I Rumanian hunter will be obliged this year to kill at least forty hares. The norm set for the Class II hunter is thirty hares; while even the beginner, mustering all his proverbial luck, will be expected to notch twenty-five. All must be handed over to government collectors, and for every one below target at the final day of reckoning the delinquent sportsman must fork out a State fine, reckoned at the official market price for counter-revolutionary hares.

Needless to say, the hunters will not be allowed to proceed willy-nilly with such serious economic tasks. Indeed, to ensure fair play for the régime, a Rumanian militiaman will, in future, be detailed to accompany each group of sportsmen on their rather dismal jaunts. His job will be to check their licences (which ever since 1948 have been issued in Rumania only on the strength of a Marxist-Leninist reliability certificate) and to group all guns at the start according to their official grades. The whole party then moves off-rather like a chain-gang-under its guard, who gravely records in his notebook their assaults on the government targets.

But this is only the beginning of the story. For where there are norms there are supernorms—in the giddily revolving door of the Cominform world the one follows the other as surely as purge follows power.

We shall soon be hearing of Mihail Popescu, a Rumanian "shock hunter," who has overfulfilled his hare plan for 1953 by 350 per cent. Before the cheering has died down he will be outdone, in the intersatellite competition, by the Slovak "élite-stalker," Jaroslav Novak, who is already plodding grimly up the snows of the High Tatra mountains after the stags for his third consecutive Five-Year Plan.

Both will be left whole roomfuls of trophies behind by (need we specify?) that pillar of Soviet sport, the Azerbaijanian marksman Ivan Ivanovitch. This worthy is, of course, already working on his widgeon target for 1987, and is only seen by his family on October Revolution Days.

Sportsmanship-in any case an effete conception of decadent bourgeois societies-will, needless to say, go by the board. Any bird or beast -whether sitting or sleeping, deaf or blind, winged or winded-will be fair game in order that the prescribed target be reached. For, at the other end of the scale to the hunting heroes, are the saboteurs who persistently fail with their output. Instead of chaffing remarks about being "below one's form" there now comes the sinister verdict of the police escort: "You are below your norm this season, Comrade!", and for the Rumanian sportsman the answer to that may well be a change of air in the Czech uranium mines at Joachymov, or a bracing four - year - spell frolicking with Danube-Black Sea Canal excavators nearer at home.

The only possible gainers by all this are the hares themselves, who, after a stern challenge to their agility in the first part of the season, might indeed come out very well in the end. For it will not be astonishing to learn that, as time goes on, fewer and fewer Rumanian workers will apply for the dangerous privilege of a hunting licence. Indeed, they may even start looking back rather wistfully to the bad old days, when this nerve-racking battle of wits with statistics and the State police used to be left to those capitalists dotty enough to go in for it as a sport.





S one who is forever seeking to expand his activities, the American businessman lives in a state of preoccupation with the future. He is an eager subscriber to all manner of market letters, bulletin services, and dope sheets which

AMERICAN

VIEWPOINT

reveal to him the shape of things to come. It means little to him that his affairs have been more or less self-

expanding for the past twenty years, that the future has been unfolding itself upwards, richly and monotonously, ever since the end of Mr. Hoover's régime, and that money invested in anything other than the manufacture of whale-oil lamps during that period must show embarrassingly large profits to-day. To suggest that these phenomena could have been foreseen by any adult able to count up to one hundred without using his fingers and toes offends the businessman. He is engaged, he prefers to believe, in a complex science in which, to keep even a toehold, he must know at all times everything that lies ahead. He is happiest, moreover, in believing himself privy to things that other people do not know.

Because these susceptibilities of the businessman are well known, other businessmen have developed a roaring trade in purveying to him the future. What Congress did last week is hardly a marketable commodity; it's certainly nothing that can be sold as inside stuff. But what Congress, or Josef Stalin, will do next month, or in June, or November—especially if it sounds like what the businessman hopes

they will do—there is the natural underpinning of the various services to which he subscribes so earnestly. Drew Pearson, the columnist and radio commentator, achieves more spectacular exposés in the course of a year than most of his competitors put together, but his most vaunted offering is his weekly "predictions of things to come—predictions," so his announcer solemnly assures the listener, "that have proved eighty-three per cent accurate."

A desperate air of haste attends most of the bulletin matter which the businessman buys. The sage hint that the Korean war will not end February 28th may take the form of a typewritten slip, crudely reproduced and stapled to the printed letter, as stop-press information, too late for the main text.

Taxes are another favorite subject. "Washington expects 10 per cent cut personal income taxes July," would

warrant another five-star stuffer. and so would any mention of Stalin. his health, relatives, or whereabouts. Besides haste, the other great ingredient of the privately circulated news letter is change. Obviously if one forecasts a ten per cent tax cut for July, it won't do for next week's, and all subsequent letters, to saw away on the same theme, so by next week the predicted cut will be five per cent and it will come not in July but in September. If Stalin is looking wan this Saturday, he'll have taken to his bed or gone on an inspection tour in time for the next letter. It makes no difference

how many conflicting reports go out, for they are all protected by copyright and are thus secure from facetious comparisons in the public prints; as for the businessman who buys them, he is in such a rush to keep abreast of the ever-changing future that

he has no time for such pettifogging.

The techniques of haste have been borrowed, of late, by magazines for the businessman reader, which serve forth the extra-special-latefinal flash material on tinted paper and with typography that suggests a telegram, or a sheet ripped from a teletype machine in full clatter. U.S. News and World Report. which describes itself as "an independent weekly news magazine published at Washington," includes in each issue a "Newsgram" page, and another called a "Worldgram," which escort the reader through the coming months with remarkable velocity. The Newsgram page, at the beginning of the year, covered just about everything that might be expected to affect the United States throughout 1953. It was captioned "Tomorrow," and for readers who missed the point there was a smaller heading, "A Look Ahead." On the assumption that readers of Punch would like most of all to know how Josef Stalin will fare this year at the hands of President Eisenhower, here is the outcome of that little tussle as the Newsgram page discloses it (good specimen, also, of something to be read, portentously, aloud):

An Ike-Stalin meeting will be improbable for many months, if at all.

Stalin, foxy, will try to pull Ike's leg. Ike, an old hand, will not permit his leg to be pulled. Ike, instead, might pull Stalin's leg.

Stalin, if he's smart, will become aware that times have changed.

Ike, heading the strongest nation in the world, is not going to jump at every little come-on device that Stalin shapes.

Stalin, not Ike, probably will be doing the guessing before 1953 ends.

The businessman's concern for things to come does not prevent him from trying to make some of them come his way. He will



seek a new market and a new product for it in highly unexpected places. The chief of the surgical service in one of the major American hospitals was waited upon, a few months ago, by one of the largest producers of cotton textiles. How often, the company's representatives asked, does static electricity, generated by the textiles worn by surgeons or otherwise used in the operating room, cause an explosion of the anæsthetics? Would textiles which do not generate static electricity be a sufficiently popular improvement to find a ready market?

The surgeon replied that although the incidence of such explosions was rare—about one in 75,000 cases, he recalled as the accepted statistic—the problem was a nuisance and an incessant worry to the hospital staff. That was all the company's people needed to know, they told him, and he would hear from them again.

"About two months later," the

surgeon said, "they made another appointment with me. This time they brought along some material which they told me had been impregnated with carbon black and which they would guarantee against generating any static electricity. But the cloth was black, dead black. You can imagine the effect on the patient if he was swathed in black sheets and wheeled into an operating room where everyone was dressed in black gowns, and wearing black shoe-covers, black caps, and black face-masks. I told the company that if the patient survived at all after his first look, he would think he had fallen in with a gang of undertakers.'

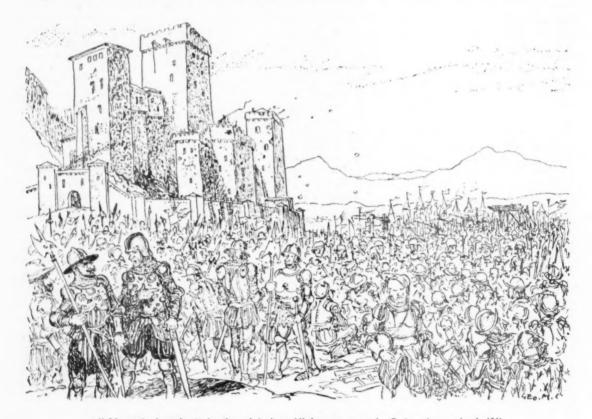
Good enough, the company responded, his point was well taken. But a third appointment was made shortly afterwards. "This time," the surgeon continued, "they had treated the black cloth with green pigment. The result was a somewhat dirty green, but at least it wasn't black, and so far as the color went, I might have considered it seriously. The trouble was that the cloth was now so dense and so heavy that no one could wear it through a major operation without keeling over. I haven't heard from them again, but it won't surprise me if they do find the right answer."

CHARLES W. MORTON

6 6

"Among the guests were Sir Barclay and Lady Nihill, the latter in grey and cerise, Mrs. Edward Barret (Miss Gwen Alban) in a charmingly graceful gown, with her husband and Mr. Michael Levien, Mr. James Master, Mr. and Mrs. Nat Kofsky, Miss Kathleen Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Scott and Mrs. Waller, Mr. and Mrs. Clement, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Maxwell, Mrs. Figgis in eye-catching grey lace, Sir Richard Woodley, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Daft and Mr. and Mrs. Rodney Chilton, the latter in a lovely off-the-shoulder black gown, Mr. and Mrs. Donovan Maule, His Worship the Mayor, Dr. J. R. Gregory and many more important and attractive people."—Nairobi Sunday Post

We'd have made for them.



"If we don't take it by five o'clock we'll have to pay the Swiss time-and-a-half."



GENEVA, Sunday

DEAR CONSTANCE

Don't you wish you were here-enjoying, as I am, a real Continental Sunday! All the people here are so gay. Their black suits shine so prettily against the blue of the lake, and as I sit here, practically in the open, scribbling away with no one to say me nay, I can see quite several of the burghers and burgesses, if that is the term, walking about or sitting in the gardens in a deliciously carefree way. Poor old England! One feels so sorry—lucky me, revelling in this sparkling atmosphere (don't be taken in by the photo, by the way, it was lovely yesterday!)-to think of Sunday at home, with all the people dressed anyhow and no boxing or anything going on. I'm sure if anyone cared to box out here it would all be delightfully done, with that sense of insouciant fun all foreigners seem to have.

Still, Jim tells me—yes, he actually wrote!!!—that there is a Bill or whatever-it-is coming up soon to try to do something about our stuffy old English Sundays. Let's hope it gives everybody a chance to sit comfortably relaxed at a musical comedy or a wrestling match or something healthy, instead of bicycling sedately about the country in shorts like a lot of monks and abbesses. Surely wrestling, reverently

carried out, can do nothing but good? Mens sana, don't they say . . . ?

If bicycle races were allowed it would be a start. The whole trouble dates back to Moses, Jim says, when everything was very different, with the hot climate and burnouses and so on. I'm sure if Moses had ridden a bicycle he would have taken a very different attitude—and the same thing applies to greyhound racing, I always say. Why can't we bring our fusty old laws up to date and open the stadiums on Sundays—for properly conducted meetings, naturally. Though they'd have to be restricted to certain hours, I suppose, so that the cars and charabanes and things didn't interfere with television reception.

Well, here I go, chattering on, and no doubt nothing will be done about it in the end. So I'll say good-bye for now, dear, and hie me off for an oh so utterly un-English tram-ride to the Fol Museum (lots of scrumptious Greek and Etruscan antiquities to browse about among, if the place is open). Ever your Felicity

See the window marked with a cross on this P.C.? Well, it's not mine actually, now. Just moved round the corner into a quieter street. H. F. Ellis



ON THE AIR

It is only very rarely nowadays that the smooth diurnal round of sound radio is marred by "circumstances over which we have no control." This stock excuse was put forward the other day on the Third to explain why gramophone records of Bach's Mass in B Minor were being played in the wrong order (the puzzled listener was left to assume that the discs were arriving somewhat erratically by parcel post), but the incident was exceptional.

On the whole, radio production is highly efficient and programmes are presented with such professional slickness that amateur performers, however gauche or nervous they may be, are seldom allowed to make the listener feel uncomfortable.

But television is another matter. Quite my most harrowing armchair experience was the occasion, a year or two ago, when a speaker blacked out completely and collapsed senseless in full view of the cameras without uttering a sound. It was agonizing, and I shall never forget it—the poor fellow rocking on his heels, struggling to ward off intruding thoughts of failure and bottomless

embarrassment, the frenzied sibilant efforts of the prompters to open his mouth, and the final horrible crash into oblivion. Ugh!

There have been many ugly moments in television since then, and most regular viewers know what it is to sit cramped and apprehensive through these sickening hitches. Perhaps I ought to make it quite clear that my "hitches" do not include technical troubles: nor do they include those blissful moments when the professionals make fools of themselves, when Mr. A fortifies himself too spiritedly against the night air and becomes quarrelsome and unruly, when Mr. B sulks, or when Mr. C makes use of forbidden adjectives. Such antics do not upset us: we are merely amused to find that professional techniques can wear so threadbare, that the idols of the screen can have feet of clay.

The really embarrassing and unpleasant moments on televisionthe real hitches-occur when we are confronted by exhibitions of stage-fright, mike-fright and camera consciousness, when inadequately rehearsed amateurs fail to extricate themselves from awkward situations, when there is no presence of mind to neutralize inexperience, when beads of sweat break through the grease-paint. I know of viewers who have been so shocked by such demonstrations that they have immediately swopped the television set for a refrigerator or a washing machine

Studio television is often both

intimate and spontaneous (unlike the theatre, which is intimate but not spontaneous, and unlike the cinema which is neither) and this combination of tête-à-tête immediacy and improvisation is both the strength and the weakness of the medium. In its outside broadcasts television can be superb. It can give us Lindwall's view of Hutton at the wicket; it can allow us to sit in, as it were, with the sinking Oxford crew of 1951; it can put us among the first violins face to face with Barbirolli ... In the studios it can enchant us with impromptu flashes of creative skill (no other form of mass entertainment allows us to see a thinker at work), of intelligence, humour and bonhomie. It can sparkle, but we are seldom out of range of the hitch.

The frequency with which viewers are subjected to hitches partly explains, I think, the widespread demand for more films in television. Films are "safe"; the cutting-room scissors find merit of a sort even in the most unpromising material, and can remove the more obvious trade-marks of the tyro. Viewers want more films because their appetite has been whetted by the daily (five times a week) editions of Newsreel, and, more recently, by the serial excellence of the American documentary "Victory at Sea." The professional certainty of touch in these films has exposed the shortcomings of "live" television, and viewers now seem prepared to sacrifice spontaneity, with its delights and its perils, for the comfortable assurance of standard canned entertainment.

There are signs, too, that the televisionaries of Alexandra Palace are beginning to think along the same lines. A few years ago the use of film in television was frowned on by the pundits. Film and television, they said, would not mix: to televise motion pictures was as tasteless as doing Hamlet on ice. Well, they are changing their minds, and the danger now is that their conversion will be too whole-hearted. Filmed programmes may be free from hitches, but too many of them would rob television of its unique possibilities.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



"He's certainly flat out for the 1953 Radio Personality Award."



Monday, January 26

People who think the House of Commons is behind the times—and even some of its own Members profess, on occasion, to think so—should have been present to-day.

The talk was all awfully modern: of interplanetary travel and the use of atomic energy.

Mr. Duncan Sandys, the Supply Minister, was chief questionee, and he showed what most accepted as proper caution in dealing with both subjects. On the first, indeed, he was downright cagey; but he did give what seemed like a promise that, before too long, atomic energy might be brought into use to provide additional electric power.

He said bluntly that the problems of this world were more than enough for the Government, but added that, some time, some Government would perhaps have to look into the question of fares and so on between the planets. A Member brought the House down to earth when he asked that, before attention

was turned elsewhere, the small problem of getting traffic efficiently from one part of London's West End to another should be solved.

Mr. Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Transport Minister, as it happened, did offer a small contribution to the solution of this problem when he promised to put into the Members' Tea Room models of underground garages which, if approved, might be constructed under some of London's squares, to ease the parking problem.

And so to the business of the day, which was . . . atomic energy. This time, it was largely in the military field, and so the Ministers were justified in stonewalling to a considerable extent. But not, it was generally felt, to the extent to which Mr. "Toby" Low, Mr. Sandys' Parliamentary Secretary, carried it. This once-cheery man now appears to be a sad-faced Ministerial Atlas, carrying the entire cares, sorrows and toil of the Government on his own bowed and unaided shoulders. He always seems to have so many

papers and notes and pens and pencils that he becomes lost in them —and so do the answers to questions from other M.P.s.

His chief, Mr. Sandys, did his best to transform Mr. L. into a Ministerial Archie Andrews, but without conspicuous success. Answers that were clear as they left the lips of the Minister (they could be heard by most in the House) somehow got snarled up before they emerged from Mr. L.'s mouth.

However, the Government got its supplementary estimates. After all, they amounted only to a mere £100,000,000, which, in these days, is neither here nor there.

Tuesday, January 27

Drama is never far beneath the surface in the House of Commons, but it is, fortunately, seldom that so painful an interlude takes

place as one which occurred to-day. Opposition Members, ably led by



Mr. Sandys (Streatham, C.): "With all due respect to this honourable House, I do not believe that a Select Commission could throw much light on the subject of interplanetary travel."

Mr. Sydney Silverman, tried for an hour to persuade Mr. Speaker to permit a debate on the pending execution of a nineteen-years-old youth, found guilty of murdering a policeman. It was a silent and moved House that listened to the pleas, with Sir DAVID MAXWELL-Fyfe, whose dreadful task it had been to advise against the exercise of Royal Clemency, sitting, whitefaced and tense, on the Treasury Bench. Mr. Speaker was quite firm and definite: the rules and practice of Parliament did not allow of a debate while a capital sentence was pending, but only, by way of retrospective criticism of the Government, after it had been carried out.

This seemingly queer rule made the House gasp with astonishment, but there seemed no manner of doubt about its existence, and Mr. Speaker held that, as guardian of the rules, he had no choice but to enforce it. The House had, perforce, to leave it at that. But some two hundred Labour Members, with Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN at their head, organized a petition to the Home Secretary, asking him to change his mind. In vain, however.

Dr. CHARLES HILL, for the Food Ministry, announced "bonus" issues of food for the Coronation perioda pound of sugar, a quarter of marge, the materials for street parties, and (for those who live in places where the tradition holds) an ox, to be roasted whole and distributed free to all applicants. This highlymodified and rationed revival of Merrie England was generally welcomed, and it formed a fitting curtain-raiser to the debate of the day, which was concerned with the trade agreement with the Argentine. Precisely eighteen Members-Tory 10, Labour 8, Liberal 0-followed this debate, which Mr. Boyp-CARPENTER inaugurated with what seemed to be cheering news about increased (if rather expensive) meat supplies in the near future. He also hoped for a "new era" in relations between the Argentine and Britain.

Mr. MAURICE WEBB, the former Food Minister, proclaimed his intention to eschew crowing over the fact that the present Government was paying more for the meat than had the last, and on the whole he succeeded. But he clearly implied that the Tory bull had come home to roost—or roast—and sought to clinch the matter by revealing that a gentleman in Huddersfield had announced his belief that the "incoherent and fumbling" Government ought to be kicked out. The Government (both members present) took this calmly, and Major LLOYD GEORGE promised more Argentine beef, less mutton, in the future.

Their Lordships were engaged in the strange business of discussing their own "right" to be at the



Coronation. The Lord Chancellor told them bluntly that they had none, and that they went, like everybody else, only by the Sovereign's desire. Moreover, added Lord Salisbury, severely, there had been no "faking" of the ballot for Peers' places in the Abbey. The draw had been made by the Lord Chief Justice himself, with the Earl Marshal looking on.

Wednesday, January 28

The Government's Bill to restore parts of the iron and steel industry to private ownership began its passage through Committee. There have been more

exciting debates, and several with less well-worn debating points.

Thursday, January 29

It was The Same Again in the Commons, with the Steel Bill story being told yet once more. Although everybody knew the plot by heart, and even the climax was in no doubt. Members had to stay in the precincts to meet the occasional votes. They did not seem to enjoy the incarceration.

Friday, January 30

It seemed appropriate, at a time when the Members of the National Executive of the Labour Party and the Council of the T.U.C.—those inveterate holders of Sunday meetings—had announced a new series of to-the-death gladiatorial contests over the future of Mr. Aneurin Bevan, that the Commons should be discussing Sunday entertainments in general.

A Private Member's Bill was before it, 'to make lawful on a Sunday any sport or pastime legal on other days. This produced the usual formidable line-up of those who fear the coming of the "Continental Sunday," and those who don't mind if it does come. It also produced one of those sincere and even moving debates the Commons can stage on a non-Party issue. Even Lord Ruffside would not have complained of any lack of the "cut-and-thrust of debate" on this occasion.

It was, however, a very one-sided affair, with the Bill's opponents swamping its supporters. Perhaps the sudden appearance of antagonism within the theatrical profession helped to sway undecided opinion. Although it was obvious that the debate could have gone on very much longer in the crowded House, a vote was taken, and Mr. Churchill led the opponents of the Bill to victory by 281 votes to 57.

Then a resolution favouring an inquiry into Sunday laws by a Royal Commission suffered the same fate, this time by 172 to 164.

GUY EDEN



Escapade (St. James's)-The Devil Came from Dublin (Embassy)

ROGER MACDOU-GALL's new play has been very much praised, and I am sorry to sound a dissonant note; but if a comedy sets out to be also a play of ideas, it must be strictly judged, and on neither count is Escapade altogether satisfactory. One gets the feeling that while writing it Mr. MacDougall was sometimes in need of a radio fix to establish his position, for he not only runs two themes in a jumble, but runs them in a variety of manners. His play begins in farce, becomes a long drawn out marital brawl, breaks into pure comedy, and finishes in drama saved from tragedy by an unexpectedly happy ending. It is far more intelligent work than is commonly unloaded on us in the West End, but the author's talent is blurred by his indecision.

Both themes concern children. The first, and lighter, shows a home breaking up to the danger of three boys away at school, and vaguely raises the question of boarder v. dayboy; the second is a reminder that when determined, the young can follow their principles with less fuss than grown-ups. The incessant wrangling of the first act is amusing in places, tedious in others. Mr. NIGEL PATRICK has to be a bellicose

pacifist, and in doing so is obliged to discard the polished charm which he can so nimbly command. As his wife, Miss PHYLLIS CALVERT is more happily served, but neither part adds up to much. For me the play only comes fully to life with the discovery that the boys, more active for peace than their father. have stolen an aeroplane and flown to UNO in Venice with a warning message to the children of the world. The resulting crisis at the school is very funny indeed. In interviews with the headmaster and the harassed parents two boys, very well taken by LANCE SECRETAN and ALEC McCowen, cover the crusaders' tracks with brilliant aplomb. At the same time Dr. Skillingworth, with whom that good actor Mr. ERNEST CLARK has a somewhat erratic row to hoe, is puzzling, and so is his school. If the Doctor had worn sandals and boasted a degree in psychiatry, the aroma of St. Trinian's would have been explained. As things are you would guess him to be a delayed disciple of Dr. Arnold. Another puzzle is provided by the economics of this long flight in a light aeroplane.

Parts of the last act, while one of the boys is given up for lost, are rather moving (they had called him Icarus, and thus asked for it). The father's pomposity crumbles. The home is saved. And so, finally, is the boy. In all this a message seems to be on the way, yet never arrives in clear. We find it impossible



(The Devil Came from Dublin Sergeant Whistler—MR. LIAM REDMOND

to take the adventure seriously, except as a pathetic reflection of the times. Perhaps that is it. In spite of such uncertainties the play has fine revealing moments, and among its pleasures is the battered journalist, curiously old-style, of Mr. Hugh GRIFFITH.

Personally I thrive on stage Irish, so long as it is the neat stuff, and not doctored for export. Mr. PAUL VINCENT CARROLL'S The Devil Came from Dublin, describing the undoing of a puritan magistrate sent to clean up a village of smugglers, is both. The bar scenes, containing a memorably absurd arrest, are often very entertaining, but the rest sink into romantic blether. As a drunken sergeant Mr. LIAM REDMOND is splendid, until he grows farcical. Mr. OLIVER McGREEVY and Mr. HARRY HUTCHINSON are also on the right side, and Mr. JOHN PHILLIPS does wonders for the overdrawn magistrate.

Recommended

At the moment, an evening by the fire. Or, while waiting for something new and good, go back to The Deep Blue Sea (Duchess) or The River Line (Strand).

ERIC KEOWN



Andrew Deeson—Mr. Hugh Griffith John Hampden—Mr. Nigel Patrick
Dr. Skillingworth—Mr. Ernest Clark



The Long Memory-Time Gentlemen Please!

HIS is no place to start trying to explain something that is largely indefinable, but I am moved to attempt to convey some idea of how The Long Memory (Director: ROBERT HAMER) fits in to what I have come to regard as a distinct category of recent fiction. The film is adapted from the novel by HOWARD CLEWES, which I have not read: but the atmosphere is recognizably akin to that of the novels of, among others, F. L. Green. There is the same sort of basis of conventional melodrama (in this instance the central figure is a man just out of gaol and panting for vengeance on the people whose perjury sent him there) and the narrative method is in the same way a little pretentious, tending to introduce characters that are either artificially contrived to be picturesque and "interesting" or else merely conventional personifications or symbols of qualities needed at that point in the story-neither kind being fully thought out or credible. (Examples of each here are, first, the elderly eccentric played by MICHAEL MARTIN-HARVEY and, second, the reporter played by These works GEOFFREY KEEN.)

seem to be manufactured novels, worked out by the conscious choice and manipulation of themes and characteristics, and treated in a consciously "serious" way: competent jobs, but without the spark of life in them. You may say that these remarks have no place in any notes about a film, but my point is that the films of these stories too (and many of them get filmed) make a similarly veiled, blunted impression. This one does, and besides it has a bitty, broken-backed script; and yet it's well done, well acted by JOHN MILLS and many of the smallpart people, well photographed, with plenty of visually striking scenes on the mud-flats of the Thames Estuary and in the dock and warehouse district of London. Even before it gets to the usual, foolproof suspense-chase at the end it is never wearisome, it never fails to hold one's attention; simply, it hasn't the fresh, stimulating, lively flavour that would make one want to see it again.

If Time Gentlemen Please! (Director: Lewis Gilbert) had been brought out with a splash, one might have a mind to be tough with it; but it was not press-shown and as I write has not even been advertised as the second feature with the new Errol Flynn film (which was not press-shown either). Tales of spontaneous applause at every performance made me go to see it, and I have to report that this "Group Three" production, an uneven, sometimes obvious, often over-playful, typically English joke, has a great deal more good in it than many a much-publicized epic. Its main fault is the old British tendency to go for any kind of laugh baldheaded-as in the office when the pretty secretary replies to a question 'Search me" and the boss says hastily "Some other time." Both these speeches are out of character,



[Time Gentlemen Please! Emma Stubbins-Hermione Baddeley

out of place, out of mood and unnecessary; they went in only for the sake of the screech they would rouse from part of the audience. There are plenty of other moments of this kind in the picture, but it weathers them all. The basic situation is the never-failing one where sudden riches exalt an endearing rascal at the expense of the respectably pompous. All the personages are really types, but the cast is full of excellent character players who make them worth watching. Say what you like, this kind of unpretentious fun, crudities and all, is better value than elaborate, solemn, expensive "boxoffice."

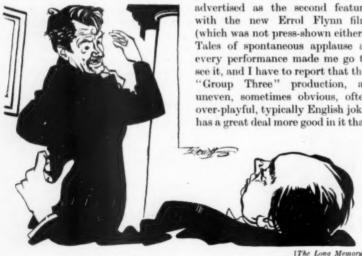
Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to Punch reviews)

There are four good new ones in London: Time Bomb and Jeopardy in the same programme, Dr. Knock, with Louis Jouver, and The Net. Otherwise the top programmes are as before—Les Jeux Interdits (14/1/53) and Les Sept Péchés Capitaux (24/12/52).

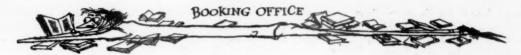
Top new release is the Chaplin Limelight (29/10/52).

RICHARD MALLETT



Davidson-JOHN MILLS

Boyd-John Chandos



. . . and Heaven Too

The Loved and the Unloved. François Mauriac. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 9/6

The Blue Hussar. Roger Nimier. MacGibbon and Kee, 12/6 Mrs. Martell. Elizabeth Eliot. Cassell, 10/6

A S Mr. Gerard Hopkins' translations of M. Mauriac's novels pile up, the inevitable anti-Mauriac reaction sets in. This is a pity because the novels do not appear in order of merit; the latest, The Loved and the Unloved, is one of the best. Nobody can tell a silly story better than M. Mauriac; the narrative power with which he forces his grotesques through this vale of tears until the Most Unlikely Person becomes the victim of divine grace is astonishing. As an amateur theologian he must have slowed down recruitment to the Roman Church more than even Mr. Graham Greene; but he is a very professional craftsman in the novel—I use the word to include this long-short story in deference to its price.

A student allows an ageing, unattractive governess to believe he will marry her if she lets his friend seduce her pupil. When she has fulfilled her part of the bargain he throws her over. This cad, of course, turns out to be the one character who is "moving towards God." M. Mauriac harries the unappetizing spinster with the relish of W. S. Gilbert, yet the story is not as depressing as it sounds. It holds the attention continuously and the background is perfectly done, the family jealousies and provincial hatreds amid the rainswept conifer forests: M. Mauriac is certainly Number One The Pines.

In an Epilogue he replies to some of his critics, ending his little apologia by suggesting that he was created solely for the production of the kind of novel that he has produced. Literary criticism is as powerless to deal with this as with his reliance on a deus ex gratia to get him out of difficulties in his tales. Mr. Graham Greene, with whom he is so often and so misleadingly compared, never gives the same impression of rigging the gods. He sympathizes even with the humanity that disgusts him, and he has none of the relish with which the Frenchman stalks about, lining up the goats for the fire and performing a last-minute conjuring-trick to turn one goat into a sheep and thus give a wan verisimilitude to the pastures of heaven. Where M. Mauriac scores is in the depth and solidity of his country backgrounds and in his sense of the past. Beside this, Mr. Greene's urban moralities seem pavement thin and The Seed sprouts amid seediness in side streets where the stucco peels for compline and nobody has been a parishioner very long.

M. Roger Nimier belongs to the generation that emerged from adolescence as France fell. His France is not a land of disputes over wills and marriages but of political betrayal and martial glory. The Blue Hussar follows a handful of soldiers through the

invasion and occupation of the Rhineland. The characters tell the story, with frequent changes of first-person narrator. The first half of the book is the more interesting, with its ex-Fascists enjoying the military life while rejecting the various ideologies propounded to rationalize it. The second half, in which the meticulously described sex-life of a German woman symbolizes Teutonism faced with Gallicism, enters a rather fuzzy dream-world. However, taken as a whole that it is not, The Blue Hussar has a good deal of skill and intelligence. Some of it will appeal to readers interested in the history of contemporary France and some to readers who like their pornography symbolical.

In Mrs. Martell the inspiration that gave Miss Elizabeth Eliot's previous novels their peculiar mixture of levity and terror seems to be running thin. Despite some delicate jokes, the story of how the coldly ambitious Mrs. Martell supplanted the ineffective Laura in the respectable affections of Edward slips towards the novelette. If Miss Eliot's nettle-sharp malice and odd, flickering fun cease to serve an individual sense of event, she will produce not only novelettes but bad novelettes; she lacks the hard-fisted competence of the successful novelettist.

R. G. G. PRICE

The Table-talk of Samuel Rogers. First collected by the Rev. Alexander Dyce. Edited, with an Introduction, by Morchard Bishop. Richards Press, 12/6

Looking beyond Dyce, one sees that Rogers might easily have been a bore. One sees the literary lion-hunter, senile, spiteful, scantly audible, endlessly recalling what So-and-so said when he was a young man, or making turgid pronouncements on contemporary



"Wby it's easy!"

letters. Yet in Dyce's record there is hardly a dull paragraph; for the So-and-sos in his pages are Fox, Porson, Sheridan, Wordsworth, Wellington and countless other figures of enduring interest. They are met, as it were, unbuttoned; there is hardly one important utterance in the whole record; yet the sum of it all is not only grand entertainment but a valuable sidelight on the times. For the real connoisseur of table-talk, of course, triviality doesn't matter at all; he delights as much in Fox's "Remember that good coffee cannot be made in a moment" as in Wellington's remark, when told that the ship in which he is sailing is likely to sink-"Then I shall not take off my boots."

Benjamin Britten. Edited by Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller. Rockliff, 30/-

Described as a commentary by a group of specialists, this is an unusually large book to be devoted to a musician under forty. Britten has attracted a strong faction of admirers (nineteen of the most fulsome represented here), although perhaps, unlike Wagner, he does not repel an equally strong party of antagonists; his music is too obviously full of invention and instinctive mastery over effective sounds for that. The lavish adulation of his friends, however, and their determined seeking after profundity in his lightest musical utterance, arouse the suspicion of the as yet undecided critic, and create a demand for a healthy breath from the opposite quarter. But whether you believe that "none of his contemporaries has managed



"They're rather sweet-two ginger, two tortoise-shell, and one all black . .

with such awesome brilliance to return English music to the main stream of European culture," or feel that, like measles, he is something to be got over, this book is worth reading: in the former case, its detailed analyses will lend factual basis to belief, and, in the latter, you may wonder what an equally exhaustive study of Vaughan Williams and the other British giants of the twentieth century might reveal.

Ladies' Chain. Neville Blackburne. The Falcon Press, 21/-

Although the author puts this book forward as a study in the emergence of women to the world of affairs it is doubtful whether anyone else will see it that way. He has covered some fifty years of the Regency period and thereabouts with biographies of notable beauties of Pall Mall and St. James's Square, Carolines and Georgianas and Annabellas, all presumably enchanting (though the book surprisingly lacks portraits in evidence), but all of them anxious to come out only as social climbers. The most energetic of the troupe, introduced riding a pig down Edinburgh High Street, is conducted to a final triumph with no fewer than three dukes and a marquis lined up as captives for her row of undistinguished daughters. Intentionally or not Mr. Blackburne, through his tales of innumerable small squalid intrigues, has given an impression of rather wistful sadness beneath the tinkling brilliance. His charmers grow old and put on weight. He is always in a hurry to push on to the next.

SHORTER NOTES

The Art of Ernest Hemingway. John Atkins. Peter Nevill, 15/-. Despite its ramshackle structure and occasional blind swipes at irrelevant targets, this is sensible, and sometimes piereing, criticism. Mr. Atkins has too strong a literary character to be a good academic critic; but what he does see the sees freshly and strongly. Like Shaw on Ibsen, he illuminates the object by burning himself. He makes new points as they should be made, proudly and exorbitantly. In the next edition he might deal with Mr. Wyndham Lewis's attack on Mr. Hemingway in Men Without Art.
The World of Henry Alken. Aubrey Noakes. Witherby,

Amusing account of the golden age of sporting eccentrics, written round a good appreciation of Alken's illustrations. A deep gulf yawns between the Welfare State and the Marquis of Waterford, who put aniseed on the hooves of a clergyman's horse and hunted him with bloodhounds, John Mytton, who cured hiccups by lighting his nightshirt, and Captain Barclay, who walked 1,000 miles in 1,000 consecutive

hours for 1,000 guineas. Hunting, coaching, bear-baiting, prize-fighting—all are presented in refreshing style.

Venus in the Kitchen. Edited by Norman Douglas.

Heinemann, 12/6. Douglas's first work was a Foreign Office Report on the Pumice Stone Industry of the Lipari Islands.

This, his last, affectionately prefaced by Graham Greene, is a collection of aphrodisiac recipes attributed to a mythical friend. Characteristically outrageous and scholarly, it r. Marmalade of Carnations to Marrow of Leopard. ranges from

Cotillion. Georgette Heyer. Heinemann, 12/6. is a fairy-tale plot in a Regency setting. Pretty Kitty escapes from a curmudgeonly uncle into the dizzy maze of London Society. There are routs and intrigues, broken hearts and happy endings. All is light as a bubble, and, though the author is rather too heavily conscientious about the idiom of the times, there is wit, wisdom and charm.

Love's a Man of War. Violet Dean. Gollancz, 12/6. The story of a woman from childhood almost to old age, of her young love too soon over, her unhappy marriage, her satisfying affair with an elderly Italian who is imprisoned and disappears under Mussolini's régime. Vivid backgrounds—Victorian London, India, Italy—add to the interest of a story rich in characters

IN SEARCH OF BILLINGTON ROAD

THE stranger paused outside the station and looked about him uncertainly.

"Can I assist you?" I inquired. I was feeling in a helpful frame of

"Thank you," he said. "I am trying to find Billington Road."

I was disappointed. I had never heard of Billington Road. If he had asked me for Mayflower Avenue I could have told him where it was immediately. I have lived there for twelve years and know it well. Or again, if he had wanted Station Approach I could have replied at once that he was standing on it. However, handicapped as I was, I determined to do my best for him.

"What sort of a road is it, longish or shortish?" I asked.

"I don't know," he replied, "but the number I want is 143."

I pondered. "Longish, I should think. Do you know anything else about it?"

The man hesitated. "It has a pig-bin in it. My friend mentions a pig-bin in his letter."

"Good!" I said. "That narrows the field. A longish road with a pig-bin. Does he say what type of pig-bin?"

He drew a letter from his pocket and examined it. "No, he doesn't say what type."

"A pity," I said. "It would have helped a great deal to know whether Billington Road has a plain converted dust-bin, a pivot-top, or one with a lid which can be operated by a foot-movement. This last sort is pretty rare, and the only one in the district, as far as I know, is over there by the wall. Now," I said emphatically, "if it could be established that the road you're looking for had a pig-bin of this kind, there's no doubt Station Approach is what you want. And this is Station Approach."

"But there are no houses here," objected the gentleman.

"A good point," I said. "That eliminates Station Approach, and from this we can take it that



Billington Road hasn't got a pig-bin with a foot-operated lid."

There was a short silence as he digested this extra piece of information.

"You can't help me then?" he said.

I was surprised. What did he think I had been doing! Before he met me his knowledge of Billington Road was negligible. Now he knew not only that it was longish but it hadn't got a pig-bin with a footoperated lid. In addition he had learned Billington Road wasn't Station Approach. Nevertheless I decided to overlook this thoughtless remark and continue the investigation.

"Is it near the Town Hall?" I asked. "If it is, you're as good as inside your friend's house, for I can give you foolproof instructions how to get there."

"I don't know," he said lamely.
"My friend says nothing at all about the Town Hall."

"Dear me!" I exclaimed. "It would have been better if your friend had mentioned the Town Hall rather than the pig-bin."

"Well, thank you for your trouble," he said. "I'll ask someone else." He turned and walked away. I followed, unwilling to be beaten so easily.

"Look here," I said, drawing abreast, "there's a newspaper seller

just round the corner. He's been there for years. We'll ask him."

"You are very kind," he answered, "but please don't bother."

"No trouble at all," I assured im.

I bought a newspaper. "Is Billington Road near here?" I asked.

The newspaper seller removed his hat and scratched his head. "It's gone, years ago," he said.

"What!" I cried.

"Pulled down just after the war," he explained.

I turned to the gentleman.
"That letter hasn't been delayed,
I suppose?"

"It was written a fortnight ago," he replied. I thought I detected a slightly impatient note in his voice.

"Are you quite sure of your facts?" I said to the newspaper seller.

"'Course I'm sure," he said

indignantly. "You ask my brother-in-law at the Baths. He lived there."

In the circumstances I decided to take his word for it.

The gentleman interposed "It could have been rebuilt."

"Oh, it's the new Billington Road you want," said the newspaper seller.

"Of course!" I snapped.

"You didn't say," he said aggressively. "I thought you wanted the old one."

"Well, where is the new Billington Road?" I asked.

"Dunno," he said. "I think they put it up somewhere else."

"Thank you once again," said the stranger, and moved off speedily. Suddenly I thought of an

excellent suggestion.

"Hi! Sir," I shouted. The gentleman appeared to increase his pace. "I've got it," I said breathlessly. "There's a policeman on

point-duty about a mile down the road——"

"It's quite all right," he broke in. "I've decided to telephone my friend and ask him for directions. I'm so sorry you have been troubled."

"Don't mention it," I said.

"The nearest 'phone box is in the station. I'll take you there." We walked back up the approach.

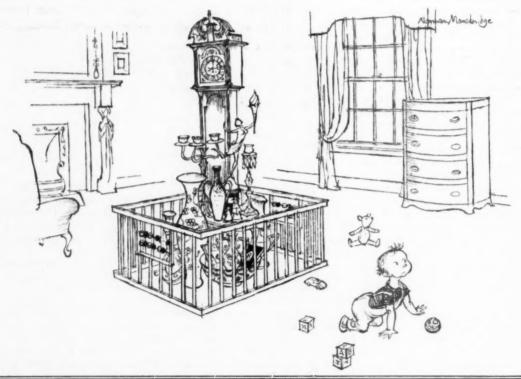
"I should be glad to know how to get to this place myself," I laughed. "You never know, someone else may ask me for Billington Road."

"I hope not," he said.

I waited in the booking-hall while he telephoned. As he came out of the booth I asked, eagerly, "How do you get there? What did he say?"

"He told me to go round to the back of the station and take a taxi."

"Good idea!" I said. "I'll just show you where the rank is."



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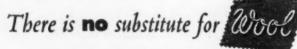
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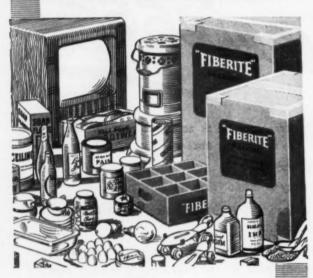
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